Depot Town Rag

December 1988

FREE 100% RAG CONTENT

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI

Merry Christmas

Few places in modern America have the flavor and feeling of the old fashioned Christmas holiday as the towns and neighborhoods which recall our earliest experiences with that season and its traditions..

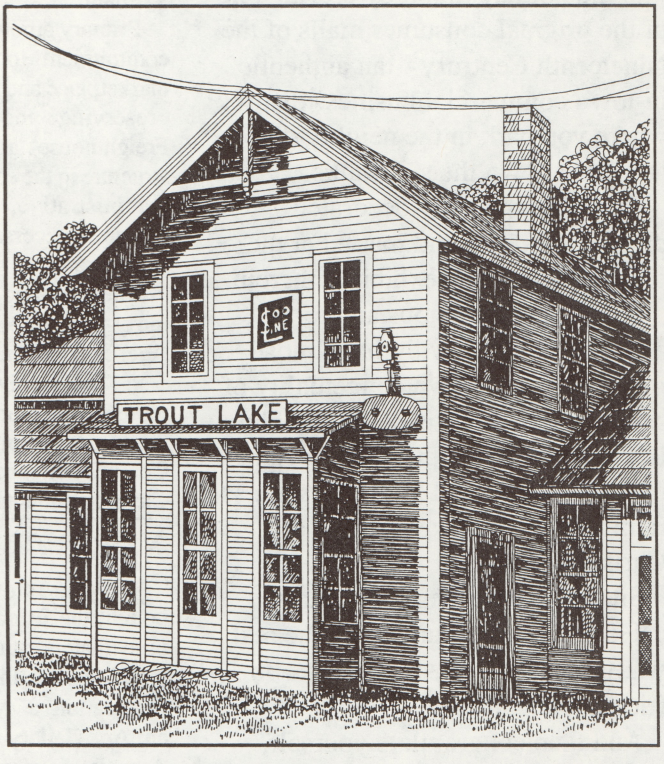
Ypsilanti's Historic District is the kind of place from which artists choose their scenes for greeting cards, note paper and advertising scenes to remind the more hurried and modern world what it used to be like 'way back when.'

The 3rd annual Festival of Lights in Riverside Park (November 20-January 1)will draw thousands to the area and many of them will spill over into that quaint little district down between the River and the Railroad track. Just like during the August Heritage Festival, we'll be discovered again!

Depot Town's annual Victorian Holiday kicks off with business open houses on Sunday, December 4th. Miller's Ice Cream owner, Sally Richie, said, "I guess we're really old fashioned down here. We just celebrate the Christmas holiday in December. Most of the slick shopping centers started right after Hallowe'en, but it's just not appropriate with our style."

In addition to the warm and intimate open houses, the December 4th event will include carriage rides through the district and parks, a special Holiday Crafts show at the Freight House, a baking contest, the third annual concert of Our Lady's Madrigal Singers and Santa, himself, will be visiting with neighborhood tots in The Old Caboose.

The one-day event will kick off a month-long shopping and touring spree that continues through Christmas and into the New Year's celebration. Brochures describing the many events are available at all participating business in the block.



Janet Trowbridge Francouer's drawing (above). "In remote locations where an agent was needed, railroads often provided living quarters upstairs over the waiting room -office. The depot at Trout Lake, put up in 1907 by the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic, presided over an important junction of the South Shore and the Soo Line, and is still in use today."

-Michigan Historical Society's "Brackets & Bargeboards"

Ypsilanti' railroaders lived in the entire district called Depot Town, today, and bachelors kept their residence in such railroad hotels as The Oliver House (Aubree's Saloon). A shanty town near the round house was the home of many more who were only part-timing their railroad careers.

Victorian Holiday
Sunday, December 4
- Open Houses
- Crafts Show
- Carriage Rides
- Baking Contest
- Madrigal Concert

Depot Town D.D.A. reorganizing, set for new start

Citizens interested in the reactivation of the Depot Town Development Authority met with the Historic Depot Town Foundation and Mayor Murdock in November to discuss the processes necessary for re-mapping the district and appointing new members to that body. At this point, parties who have professed an interest in being appointed include Paul Fetters of River Art Works; Scott Sobbry of City Body; Corrine Sikorsky from the Ypsilanti Food Co-op; Rex Richie of the Newel Block; City Councilmember, Danny Hoffman; property owner, Carolyn McKeever, the Food Co-op's Michael Lachance; Farmers' Market manager, Gary Urick; Bill French of Aubree's Saloon; Rag editor, Tom Dodd: and Mayor Murdock, who would serve as an ex-officio member.

Anyone still interested in being appointed should contact the Mayor this month, since the above are ready to put the Authority in place at the drop of hizzoner's notice of appointment.

Havings a Dickens of a time in Depot Town

You're invited. . .
to step back into that time somewhere between Charles Dickens' London and the advent of the off-center shopping center. Step into the holiday mood by touring one of the original consumer malls of the Nineteenth Centrury -- an authentic in-town commercial business district where you park in the neighborhood and walk down the sidewalks.

Peer into the gaily decorated display windows and marvel at the old-time ingenuity exhibited therein.

Enter the cozy shops and re-acquaint yourself with that almost forgotten home-town congeniality of shop owners and business folk who live either up over the store or right down the street and their faces are as familiar as your own family's at Christmas dinner.

Sit in the charming restaurants, cafes and saloons and enjoy the real warmth of the holiday season with friends old and new.

And then congratulate yourself, too, for helping to make an old city neighborhood loveable once more. Historic preservation does much more than rehabilitate old buildings. It brings back a quality of urban life and love almost forgotten in the high-tech hustle of the commercial shopping season.

Welcome back to a commercial district so old fashioned that it celebrates the Christmas Holiday only in the month of December.

- from the 1988 Depot Town Merchants' flyer.

City Radiator
100 North River
483-2248

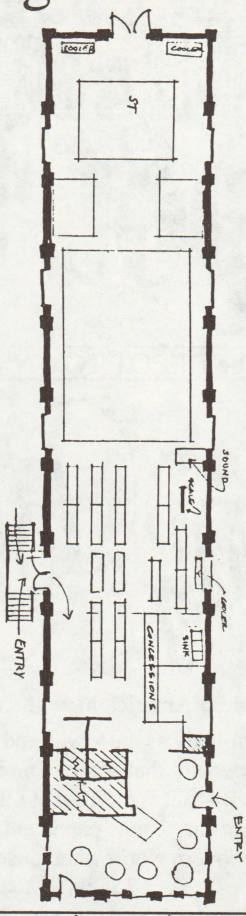
Farmers' Market Freighthouse Plan unveiled by City planners

The November 14th session in the Freight House Coffee Shop saw Market manager, Gary Urick, explain the Master Plan for that building as put forth by Architects Four, Inc., of Ann Arbor. The preparation was done in conjunction with the Community and Economic Development Department of the City of Ypsilanti.

Primary among the City's concerns were its commitment to 1) building a community marketplace and a community event facility, 2) preserving and maintaining the railroad Freighthouse as an historically significant structure in the community and 3) providing the administrative, managerial and financial resources necessary to maintain the facility and its programs.

The fifty-two page Plan and its more-than thirty-page Appendix are available from Mike Ager's office at City Hall.

The study process involved groups representing Market resources, events planners, the Heritage Foundation, the Historic District Commission, and representatives from various City departments.



Printed at left, is the proposal for events layouts such as the Winter Jazz Series which ran in that space for the last several years.

The above plan allows for 170 people at tables, 120 in bleachers, 208 in chairs and 55 in the existing coffee shop, for a total of 553 patrons.

Depot Town's jazz consumers may wish to speculate how such events might again be presented in this space under the proposed plan.

Volunteer of the Month:

Mary Ann MacDonald and her husband bought the Blinn House on Grove Street and immediately started to attend neighborhood meetings. She's been to the Heritage Foundation, a Mayor's Commission meeting, an Art Gallery session and a Depot Town Association meeting in the three short months they've lived here.

"This sure,isn't Ann Arbor," said MacDonald, when asked what talents she can bring the district. They had lived for six years in that town, but couldn't connect with any real neighborhoodliness.

Mary Ann writes grants. Ann Arbor's loss is our gain. Welcome to the community!

Window displays judged after closing, Saturday, December 3.

Depot Town windows are a special treat during the annual Victorian Holiday which starts December 4th. Join the usual group of judges in the street at 10 p.m. Saturday, December 3rd to help create a category for each window. Prizes will be awarded to everyone participating -- and the judges are open to the usual bribes. The only way to fight this kind of graft is from the inside. Join us!

City Body
20 East Cross Street
Front end alignment and Collision repair

483-3637
Our Little Secret
Resale Clothing & Other Niceties
23 E. Cross Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
In Historic Depot Town

New kids on the block:

Artwear Adventures & Awards

is moving from its Second Street location in Ann Arbor to a new store at 9 East Cross Street in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town. An open house was held on Saturday, November 19 to celebrate its grand opening.

Artwear Adventures & Awards provides a complete line of cutom-designed silkscreened wearables and engraved items. These items include silkscreened T-shirts, sweat shirts, hat and engraved awards, gifts, name tags, signs and the like. Artwear offers excellent quality at competitive prices with exceptional turn-around time on orders.

The company, formerly known as Artwear Adventures, was started seven years ago by Eunice Phillip and Janice Rogers and specialized in silk screening. It was recently purchased by Joanne and Larry McGinnis, who added engraved items to the line of products. the company name was changed to reflect the expanded product line. The McGinnis's, formerly of Battle Creek, plan to increase the company's sales over the next few years.

Artwear Adventures and Awards has operated as a wholesale house up to now and, with the move, will begin retail operations as well.

Bell Book & Candle,

Depot Town's charming new shop,
specializing in Books relating to:
Recovery • Addictions • Psychology
Self Help • Metaphysical • Spiritual
Health • Nutritition • Womens / Mens Issues
Children's Literature • Astrology-Tarot
Native American Indian Literature
Also Candles, Crystals, Cards, Tapes,
Bells & Jewelry
Holiday Hours:
Mon. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Tues. - Sat. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sun. 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
44 East Cross Street • 487-1970

Miller's SINCE 1896 ICE CREAM
Open All Year!
42 E. CROSS
HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN

Phony mural painted out

When local artists plotted to paint the austere storefront at 32 East Cross in 1985, even the City's Historic District Commission saw the humor in painting the former store front back onto the cinder block facade. Owners, John and Shirley Kornilakis financed the project and the paint brushes of McKeever and Dodd went to work for the rest of that week.

While they painted they also documented the replication via more than two-hundred 35 mm. slides taken from a camera mounted in the second floor window across the street. The slides were arranged in reverse order in the first half of a multi-media presentation which saw the building 'disppearing' and then reappearing in the final half of the show. As the slides faded from one step to the next, the accompanying poem-song followed their progress. The slide show has been featured at many district meetings since and has given, in a tongue-in-cheeck manner, still more impetus to the ethic of not removing the original architectural details from older buildings in any neighborhood.

Last month the facade was painted again, to make way for the grey, white and red front of Dragon's Lair Futons, and many have asked for a reprinting of that poem. Perhaps it is still appropriate.

On the right track again

Depot Town's popular Sidetrack is back in business again, after a month of management shuffling and papered-over front windows. The trackside eatery and saloon underwent top level changes in its flow of authority, partly due to a shift in personnel/owners. Their closed doors brought nearly as much consternation to the block as the train wreck of 1939.

The new organization may not look too different to most of the clientele, since Dennis is still behind the bar, but look closely and you'll note that he's now the full-time nanager and is in charge of the whole operation, now.

The usual menu was cut back for the first few days, but will soon be back to the normal popular pattern. The Ann Arbor News' Connie Crump and her Crumpets rated Sidetrack's hamburger as the 'best in Washtenaw County." Now the tradition of "good food, good drinks, good times," continues their well respected tradition in Depot Town.

Ted's Auto Electric

A Victorian Storefront Is Missing!

Some thieves have stolen a building
That was very well known on this block.
They're taking away all our history.
The districts' been put into hock.
The neighborhood grocery is gone, now.
It's been taken from under our nose.
It stood for so long on East Cross Street
Some say that's the way that it goes.

Just a small store on the corner,
It stood here for many a year.
They've bricked the facade in completely.
The architects' ghost sheds a tear.
The Italianate cornice was modest,
And its brackets were pure middle class.
We shopped there for years for our staples.
How ever could this come to pass?

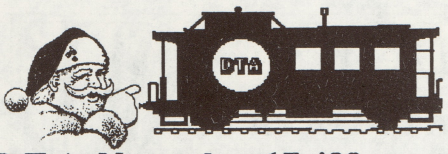
The sign was a board that was painted
And nailed up right over the door.
No neon electric was needed;
That's what the shop window was for.
With cast iron arches and plate glass,
The shop windows shone like a jewel.
An entrance with transom and sidelights.
How could anyone be so cruel?

The window designs were so honest:
A simple display of their wares.
No slick advertising was needed.
Is it true that now nobody cares?
Now bricks and blocks fill in the spaces
They're painted all one shade of brown.
If our places keep looking their faces
We'll be an anonymous town.

The Historic District Commission
Has put this abuse to the test.
Such careless abandon is reckless;
Sometimes the old ways are best.
A Victorian store front is missing;
The neighborhood sheds a sad tear.
If a highway mentality rules us,
Will we soon see a vacant lot here?

YPSI FOOD COOP
WHOLE NATURAL FOOD IN BULK OR SMALL QUANTITIES
M.T.Th.F. 10-7 Wed 10-9 312 N.River
483-1520 Sat. 9-7 Sun. 12-5

Patronize the merchants who bring you the Depot Town Rag



D.T.A. November 17, '88

Guests: Chuck Soule, City Councilmember, Ward 4; Connie Harris, curious visitor; Mary Ann MacDonald, new neighbor imported from Ann Arbor.

Announcements: Thanks to VP Paul Fetters for running a good meeting last month.

Minutes of October '88 DTA were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report = $5924.71 total.

$625.30 Artists & Artisans
430.00 Merchants
(247.00) Hallowe'en Party
(3,644.30) Rag

Treasurer, Judi Monaghan, reported that things look better than they are since WEMU's Frog Island profits have been held in our account. A motion was made and passed unanimously to close Frog Island's accounts, despite an outstanding bill, and remit to EMU their profit.

The good news on the money front was the receipt of a $600 grant from the Michigan Council of the Arts to be applied to this past year's Heritage Jazz Competition.

Budget and Events -- Now that DTA's hosting of events has diminished, it's time to review and re-evalutate our **insurance coverage** as it related to DTA and its subsidiary groups. DTA president, Jake Guter is loooking for input on insurance restructuring.

Sunday, December 4th, will open Depot Town's **Victorian Holiday** with specials and open houses at area businesses and a holiday bazaar featuring a baking contest and studel making demonstration at the Farmers' Market. Santa will visit the Old Caboose and once again, Our Lady's Madrigal Singers will delight us with traditional caroling at Aubree's Second Floor, 5 p.m. (you can make reservations for only $2 a piece.) A new addition to the festivities is an old fashioned carriage ride through Depot Town and Riverside Park. And don't forget the Christmas Window Dressing Contest. Prizes will be awarded.

2nd Vice Presidents:

Merchants -- Paul Fetters is ordering replacement bulbs for Depot Town's holiday lighting -- so let him know what you need. Paul is also looking for help putting in those bulbs during the last weekend in November and the first weekend in December. Contact Paul @ River Art Works, 48 East Cross.

Artists & Artisans are continuing their coffeehouses on Sundays with the grand addition of heat. The Artists & Artisans are planning on full 'ownership' of their space by January, as they fill it with more exhibits and, maybe, more music, too.

Antique Engine Club -- The Club's annual Christmas Party will be a pot-luck this year, Saturday, December 10th, 7 p.m. anyone carrying a big dish full of good food is welcome Those with questions can call Shirley Olsen @ 422-3318.

November 1988

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of the block:

Foundation
8 p.m. Thursday, 12/1
in The Old Caboose

Victorian Holiday Open Houses
noon - 7 p.m. Sunday, 12/4

Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 12/15
in The Old Caboose

Artists & Artisans
7:30 p.m. Monday, 12/19
Depot Town Art Gallery
19 East Cross Street

Festival of Lights
continues through 1/1/89

Engineering Society -- these kids are ready to help out with yor holidays and will take big jobs or small. Contact then via the Old Caboose mail slot.

Caboose -- for a colorful, characterful holiday event, rent the caboose. Call Gary McKeever @ 483-4256. $25 per event, $10 key deposit.

Foundation -- is submitting a list of nominations for the DDAto Ypsilanti , Mayor, Pete Murdock and City Council.

Other business --

The 'more beautiful every year' **Festival of Lights** is under way Sunday, November 20. Carolyn McKeever, this year's chair, extends special thanks to Dave Bulgarin, John Madigan, the City of Ypsilanti, and all those who gave their help and cooperation in putting a lovely show together. Anyone interseted in hosting the show as an emmissary from Depot Town can call 482-4290 to schedule your time.

The **initial meeting for Heritage Festival '89** is at Heritage Headquarters, Thursday, December 8, 5:15 p.m. The DTA is looking forward to a lovlier streetscape at next year's Heritage Fest. Bring us your ideas.

Plans are in the works for a new **Depot Town Flyer** to be distributed at the new Raddison Hotel upon its opening.

Golden Goosen Award -- grey paint.

Best Yet Award-- Depot Town's mysterious environmental clean-up engineer.

RIVER ARTWORKS
CUSTOM FRAMING
DESIGNER MATS
48 E. CROSS
DEPOT TOWN
482-8785

They liked it down here

Dear Depot Town:

Thanks to you and all the others who made the Halloween fun happen in Depot Town. What a great, safe, fun way for everyone to take part! We had a great time! Boo! Woo!
- Nan Plummer & Bill Spencer, Ypsilanti

He had fun, too!

D.T. A. . Thank you for letting me use your caboose again. It seems that Depot Town kids are always 'good,' but I like to visit them there, anyway. We always have such fun. See you next year.
- S. Claus, North Pole

Follow Santa's good example:

Rent The Old Caboose for your private holiday party. This electrically heated authentic piece of railroad history may be more than one hundred years old, but it's a great place for a party of up to a dozen kids of any age. Tables and chairs are included with the heat. All you need to do is call the caterer for a memorable private party.

Call Gary McKeever at 483-4256 and check out the Depot Town Association's terribly reasonable rates for this unique location.

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

Tom Dodd, editor

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

Depot Town Association, Inc.
Jacob Guter, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place

HANSEN'S
STANDARD PRINTING
35 E. Cross Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
483-0339

at the
Ypsilanti Farmers Market
MESSINA'S CHEESE
483-1480

Festival of Lights brighter than ever!

Ypsilanti's third annual lighting of Riverside Park began on November 20th and will be featured nightly until the first day of the new year. This year's display, all donated by local businesses and organizations, was suplemented by snowflake arches rented from Domino's Farms' display of last year, since they decided not to repeat the traffic-stopping electrical extravaganza for a second year.

Festival chair, Carolyn McKeever, extends special thanks to Michigan Bell Telephone Company for their great assistance in setting up the lights this year. Director of operations for this year's event was David Bulgarin, "without whose expertise and energy the things just could not have come together," said Carolyn, the week before the lights went on.

The event has been fraught with difficult problems to solve in its third season:

- Virtually all of the previous years' trees had to be replaced, since they were heavily damaged by storms.
- New strings blew fuses, since they were improperly wired by the manufacturer. All had to be replaced -- after the stringing and screwing-in party.
- Volunteers for installation were harder to come by, in the event's third year, but the workers came through again. Bulgarins' crew saved the day for all of Ypsilanti.
- Hosts for the nightly gates are still needed to welcome the hundreds of cars and walkers who tour the park each night.

Volunteers are encouraged to call the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce to staff the north and south gates from 6 - 8 p.m. and 8 - 10 p.m. until January first. (482-4290)

YPSILANTI RECYCLING PROJECT

651 Rice Street

(just north of the Farmers' Market in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town

Open every Saturday

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Collecting newspaper, glass, used motor oil and ferrous cans

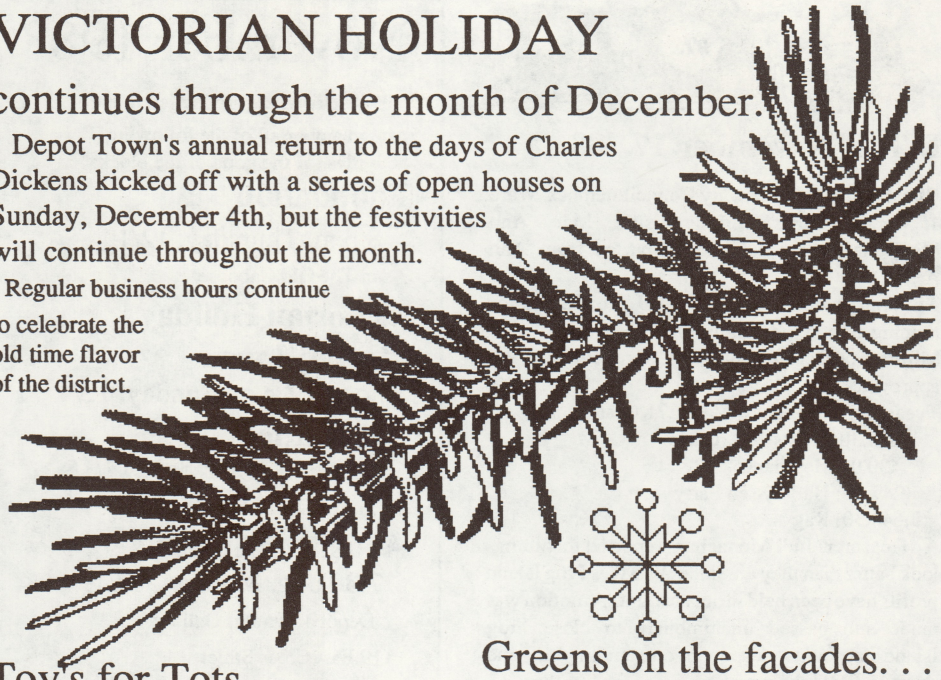
A non-profit organization

VICTORIAN HOLIDAY

continues through the month of December.

Depot Town's annual return to the days of Charles Dickens kicked off with a series of open houses on Sunday, December 4th, but the festivities will continue throughout the month.

Regular business hours continue to celebrate the old time flavor of the district.



Toy's for Tots

The November meeting of the Historic Depot Town Foundation saw a presentation of 'Toys for Tots,' a unique concept of Christmas holday themes for children which was seeking a space for installation three weeks hence. Depot Town property and shop owners who were present did not have any appropriate space available but the enthusiastic promoters still hope to find enough interior square footage for their installations. Watch the papers. It's a deserving concept for both 'tots' and adults.

Funny; when there were plenty of open store fronts in Depot Town, no one wanted to come down here. Now that everyone's spending their holidays (and the rest of the year!) in Depot Town, there's no space left for such promotions.

When there was plenty of open parking, there was little to come down here for.

It all started with Skhankwilers' Artrain Building, at 52 East Cross, which heralded the Artrain's first arrival in Depot Town. Now, the Artrain's new exhibition will feature the history of children's toys. Maybe we'll see Toys for Tots in Depot Town in another format.

Greens on the facades. . .

Our annual thanks are extended to Joe Wizauer, of Hon's Flowers & Fancies, for the oppotunity to purchase all those holiday greens at cost. The real cedar holiday roping adorns many of the district's facades this month, with their cheery red bows announcing the flavor and the spirit of the season.

Thanks, also, to the merchants who braved the winter winds to install them. And to those who assisted in wrapping the pedestrian light poles. Those portions, too, were dontated by Joe/Hon's.

. . . and lights on the roof

If all that short ladder work wasn't enough, let's also recognize all those who climbed up above their second, third and fourth floors to maintain and light the hundreds of sparkly lights again this year. The twinkly, clear lights once again added to the flavor of the neighborhood which is now being copied in downtown commercial districts throughout the world. Watch National Geographic for the Depot Town look-alikes.

J&R TRADING POST
GENERAL STORE

"A blend of past & present,
with an eye on the future!"

21 East Cross • 483-5870

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
in historic Depot Town

Every Wed. & Sat.
8 a.m. — 3 p.m.

Good Food

Aubree's Saloon & Second Floor
39 East Cross Street

•

Old Town Restaurant
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
38 East Cross Street

•

Sidetrack
Good Food, Good Drinks
Good Times
56 East Cross Street
483-1053

•

The Mean Bean
"Gourmet Mexican"
Black beans are our specialty
17 East Cross Street

•

Red Rooster Pizza
37 East Cross 483-4555

RAGTIME
An Old Fashioned Christmas
Down in
Depot Town

Ypsilanti Historical Society
Museum & Archives
Pre-Christmas Gift Sale
in the Museum Gift Shop
at 220 North Huron Street
Many attractive articles on Sale

•

December 7,8,9,, 10 a.m. to noon
Friday, December 9, 2-4 and 7-9
Saturday, December 10, 2-4 p.m.
Sunday, December 11, 2-5 p.m.

•

The public is invited to the
Annual Christmas Open House
at the Museum on
Sunday, December 11th

Antiques

Jim MacDonald's Antiques
&
Apple Annie's Vintage Clothing
29 East Cross • 481-0555

Thompson Building Mall
Over 4000 square feet of dealers
412 North River • 484-4288

Something for Everyone
CROSS STREET ANTIQUES
33 East Cross Street
Antiques Bought & Sold
Hours: Tues - Sun 11-5
482-4525

We love to **buy**
Antiques
DEPOT EXHANGE ANTIQUES
54 E. Cross • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

Depot Doo
Fine Design in Hair Style
25 East Cross Street • 484-3045

B&D Retail
Plumbing & Heating
487-1510

Big Bob's Mazazines
Magazines • Comics • Posters
50 East Cross • 485-4930

Ike's DepotBarbershop
40 East Cross Street

Hon's Flowers & Fancies
46 East Cross
482-2124